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Paris, France
June 12, 1953

In re: Nasrallah DJALAI
Armen NERCESSIAN
Ingeborg GRIFFEL
SALISADE (fmu)

Mr. Charles Siragusa
Narcotic Agent
American Embassy
Rome, Italy

Dear Sir:

Through a source in the theatre world, it was learned that GRIFFEL, a singer (ex-trafficker in Germany's black markets, girl-of-all-trades, traveller, etc.), had given a sample of morphine to an American named CHRIS. A check of Paris hotels revealed that Ingeborg GRIFFEL lived at the Elysees-Palace Hotel, Rue du Marignan 12. Mr. Hughes' office, through a confidential source, discovered that CHRIS is actually Robert Lee NELMS, living with one Georgia BROWN at the Hotel Vistor Emmanuel, Rue du Ponthieu; both these latter are in show business.

It was decided to approach NELMS openly, because of the rather nebulous nature of the original information; and because a source had stated to us that NELMS had given the sample back to GRIFFEL since he did not want to engage in illegal activity.

NELMS was interrogated by Mr. Hughes and by myself. He was identified as follows: American; born May 24, 1925 at Quincy, Illinois; residence Hollywood, California; passport #523877 issued at Washington, D.C. on November 13, 1951; occupation musician and arranger.

Georgia BROWN was not interrogated, but was identified as follows: British subject; true name Lillian Claire KLOT; born at London on October 21, 1933; British passport #42670 issued at London on February 19, 1952; occupation singer.

NELMS owns a British automobile, an MG, German "export"
license 139 Z 204, color green.

NELMS gave up to us about 5 grains of morphine (analysis not yet completed), which he stated had spilled into a shirt pocket from the sample which GRIFFEL had given to him. He did admit the truth of our information, stating that GRIFFEL had come to him to ask whether he could buy a large quantity. NELMS stated that he knew GRIFFEL only casually from night club encounters, but that she knew enough about him not to fear his betraying her or being a policeman. He could give no good reason for accepting the sample in the first place, and insisted that he had indeed returned it to GRIFFEL a few days after receipt.

I impressed NELMS rather forcefully with the thought that his possession of even traces was a serious matter, especially for an American in France. NELMS was convinced that he should demonstrate on which side of the law he stood. He volunteered to present me to GRIFFEL, but was uneasy about introducing me as a buyer. I remarked that this latter was not necessary, that an introduction as a friend would suffice.

On June 9, I was introduced to Ingeborg GRIFFEL by NELMS at the Marignan Bar, Champs Elysees. After the usual preliminaries, the conversation was led to interesting subjects. By the end of our talk, GRIFFEL had stated the following to me. She had friends, whom I could never deal with directly, who could supply a small number of kilos of pure morphine right away at \$4000.00 per kilo; later, they could supply as much as 50 kilos of heroin per month. She added that their supply of raw materials was assured. GRIFFEL became convinced that I was a person who could be trusted, and made an appointment with me for the next night at the same bar. After we left the bar, she gave me a 40 grain sample, which I later turned over to Mr. Hughes.

On June 10, I met GRIFFEL as agreed at the Bar Marignan at 2300 hours. She said that she had talked with her sources, and that they had agreed to do business. They would sell me three kilos, she said. Our conversation gave further indications, in a general way, that GRIFFEL's sources were running a laboratory.

We agreed to meet the next day, June 11, at the Marignan Bar at 2:30 p.m. I was to bring the equivalent of 12,000 dollars in French francs and dollars.

On June 11 we met as scheduled, and - as during the above meetings - were under the observation of the French police officers. GRIFFEL, after I showed her my money, left me to go consult her sources, who were apparently awaiting her nearby. She returned in about thirty

minutes and stated that her friends had become wary, and would do business only if I gave ^{her} the price of each successive kilo in advance. I lectured her very severely on the folly of attempting such a trick on "honest businessmen", and warned her that the persons behind me were not of the sort lightly to be trifled with. I told her to go back to her friends and tell them that I was not there to be swindled, and that if they had any such plans they were heading for trouble.

In about fifteen minutes, GRIFFEL telephoned me that she was coming back with one of her sources to talk the affair over with me. I said to come ahead, I had always wanted to meet a confidence man.

GRIFFEL arrived in a few minutes in company with NERCESSIAN, whose stained hands immediately made me think that perhaps the story of a laboratory might be true. After a short discussion, during which NERCESSIAN convinced me that he was not a swindler, he told me to wait while he went to get the merchandise. He and GRIFFEL left to go to her hotel where she was to lend him a valise. She returned in a few minutes.

We waited for about one hour and fifteen minutes. NERCESSIAN returned and asked us to come with him. We took a walk about, during which NERCESSIAN was constantly looking for anyone who might be following us. He noticed one policeman, who immediately broke away from us. He did not notice others who kept us under constant surveillance.

After about fifteen minutes of walking around, NERCESSIAN said we could get into his car, in which he had left the morphine. Upon his instructions we got into a four-door Studebaker with a Teheran license plate. We then drove off.

NERCESSIAN became almost immediately aware that we were being closely followed by a black Citroen automobile occupied by one woman (my wife) and about five gentlemen (French police officers). NERCESSIAN began to steer an erratic course through the supper-hour traffic. As it became quite apparent that the Citroen was following us, he began to drive very fast and recklessly in an effort to lose our pursuers.

I became afraid that NERCESSIAN would damage the Studebaker somehow in the traffic, since he narrowly missed hitting fenders with several cars as we raced through the streets. Further, I knew that if I revealed my identity there in traffic and made him stop, the resultant confusion when the French policemen swooped down on us would be undesirable. I therefore thought it best not to speak up, but rather try to contrive that the ~~whole~~ chase end at the police station where prisoners, evidence and seized car could be taken in charge without confusion.

I accordingly told NERCESSIAN and GRIFFEL that I knew a vey quiet little street where we could pull up in front of the house of some friends of mine who had aided me in other affairs in the past. I directed NERCESSIAN to the Rue des Saussaies, telling him to look for number eleven. As he and GRIFFEL were rather excitedly looking at house numbers while we drove down this street, they did not notice until we had pulled up that number 11 is police headquarters. I then told them who I was, and beckoned over the French officers to aid me.

The French officers arrested NERCESSIAN and GRIFFEL, seized a valise containing eight chemist's bottles of 250 grams of morphine each, and drove the Studebaker into the courtyard.

NERCESSIAN (first name Armen) was noted to have been born at Sahlevi, Iran on December 8, 1904, living now at Renil-Malmaison, carte de sejour #CEO4273. He confessed his part in the above actions, and, under interrogation, named Nasrallah DJALAI as his source.

DJALAI was apprehended at the Gallia Hotel, and was identified. He stated that he was an ex-consul of Iran at Brussels and Cairo. He holds Iranian passport #T207045. He had been seen in company with GRIFFEL and NERCESSIAN by policemen on this case early in the afternoon. DJALAI admitted only that he had given the morphine base to NERCESSIAN.

We convinced NERCESSIAN that we knew all about his laboratory; he told us that he would take us there. We accordingly went to Meudon, a suburb of Paris, where NERCESSIAN has a grind-stone factory. In one room we found a large glass container holding about two kilos of a substance which we learned would yield about one kilo of pure morphine when finished. The room was full of chemical apparatus, balances, and flasks and bottles containing various chemicals. A complete list of all evidence found will be forwarded to you by Mr. Hughes. Most significant was a quantity of acetic anhydride. In another room was found additional quantities of drying chemicals, filter paper, and a large scale. (Photos of laboratory will be sent shortly).

All evidence was listed on official forms and taken in charge. Copies of these lists, in company with photographs, fingerprints, copies of interrogation reports and identifications will be sent to you very soon by Mr. Hughes.

In the interrogations of GRIFFEL, NERCESSIAN, and DJALAI the following was ascertained:

1. DJALAI and a friend, an Iranian now in Teheran named SALIZADE, had smuggled, or arranged to have smuggled, fairly refined

morphine from Iran to Paris.

2. DJALAI may have friends in the Iranian government tobacco monopoly who were in league with him in procuring opium.

3. The opium was converted in Iran to morphine base, which fact interested the French Minister of Health (who arrived to interrogate the defendants personally) very much, since this base was in a more refined state than any previously "exported" from Iran by traffickers.

4. NERCESSIAN and DJALAI were in contact with various persons in Italy, England, Brussels and the USA in reference to their traffic. One of these persons is a Philips ANDREWS of London, another an Albert RICARD of Brussels. These persons were all prospective customers or agents looking for customers.

5. DJALAI et al had x large scale plans for going into the clandestine conversion business, and were, when caught, about to start converting morphine to heroin and stop merely trying to sell pure morphine in a highly refined state as they had to me.

6. The importance of this case rests not so much on the seizures as on the fact that they were small because this laboratory traffic was stopped just as it was going into production. It may well have added many kilos to the illicit market during its career.

7. Only DJALAI possesses the true information about the persons and methods involved in the procurement of opium and the smuggling of morphine to France. He has not so far been willing to divulge any of this information.

8. Prince Mahmoud de PAHLEVI, brother of the Shah of Iran, is allegedly willing and able to procure from DJALAI's sources in Iran. Thanks to NERCESSIAN's willingness to cooperate, there is a possibility of exploiting this facet of the case (cf. my report dated June 11 in re PAHLEVI and the letter therein enclosed from NERCESSIAN to PAHLEVI which will introduce an undercover agent.)

9. Ingeborg GRIFFEL, while merely used as an intermediary by the others, is an ex-black market trafficker and is also involved in the pornographic photograph commerce. She is believed to have a stock of smoking opium in Brussels, but denies this. It may be at the home of Albert RICARD, theatrical agent, not otherwise identified.

10. The only person not actually of the typical underworld sort in this case is NERCESSIAN, who went into this ~~mess~~ for money he sorely needed, and who has agreed to start working for me as soon as he gets out of jail on bail. He has already cooperated in giving information on PAHLEVI and concerning his accomplices in this matter.

The French police are preparing an illustrated booklet on this case, which will be ready shortly. The newspapers here unfortunately paid a lot of attention to the case, including photographs of defendants and laboratory, but possibly information obtained and NERCESSIAN's cooperation can still be exploited nevertheless.

At the time of his arrest, NERCESSIAN gave up from his possession a small package containing about two ounces of the morphine. From the hotel room of GRIFFEL was seized another approximate two ounces.

This present report is written as completely as possible; yet, the digests of information from respective interrogation reports will contain more precise synopses of information. I cannot at present integrate this information, since the three defendants were interrogated separately by several persons, and many seized papers have not yet been sorted, copied, etc. All essential and significant facts are contained in this present letter, however. The chemist's analysis of the morphine base has not yet been received. I have taken a small amount for submitting to the US Chemist. A detailed account of NERCESSIAN's chemical technique will be contained in the French police reports to be sent to you shortly.

Because of the impression made upon high French officials here of the gravity of the laboratory's now defunct potential, and the matter of the smuggling from Iran, I think all defendants will be held without bail. Court is in recess until October.

Yours very truly

Paul E. Knight
Narcotic Agent

cc: Bureau
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